THE PARABLE OF THE MAGPIES.

THIS is an *Age of Riddles*, the World is becoms a mere Fairy-Land, inhabited by Chimera's Monsters, Elfes and Changelings; Men act as if were at *Crofs purposes*, and therefore wonder not if the Preſs brings for *Parables*.

The late Prevarication and Flight of a certain *Overſeer* of the *Levites* in a ſmall Iſland, puts me in mind of a Tale, which is not to be found in all *Æſop's Fables*, and yet it runs much after the ſame manner. Take it as follows:

There was a time when all the *Birds in the Air* were ſummon'd to ſwear Allegiance to the *EAGLE*, whom by unanimous conſent, they had choſen to be their King. The *OSTRIDG* who reign'd over them before, having deſerted his Government, (as is the manner of that unnatural Bird,) and ſo the Throne vacant. Now the *EAGLE* had gain'd the Hearts and Affections of all the *feather'd* Kinds: The *Falcons*, *Herns*, *Storks*, *Swallows*, *Larks*, and inumerable other ſorts of High-flying Birds came in and *took the Oath*, eſpecially the *Black-birds*, were very prompt and ready to give all the Demonſtrations of their Loyalty they were capable of. To theſe joyn'd the *Nightingales*, and *Throſhes*, a harmleſs chearful ſort of Birds, that were always merry in the midſt of Afflictions, and wou'd ſing beſt when prick'd with Briers and Thorns. They all ſwore Loyalty to the *EAGLE*, charpt and carol'd his Praiſes, ſo that the Hills and Valleys, Foreſt and Plains, echo'd his Renown; they alſo formed themſelves into *Troops*, and had the over-ſight of all inferior *Magties*, and follow'd him to the Wars; for the *abdicated OSTRICH* having fled to the *VULTURE* for protection, and made a League with Him, came with huge Armies and invaded the *Eagles Dominions*; But the *Black-birds*, *Nightingales* and *Throſhes*, as I have ſaid, ſtood firm to Him, and drove away his Enemies, being reſolved never to forſake Him, till they have ſubdued the *tOSTRICH* and the *VULTURE*, with all that adhere to them.

Now among all the *Birds* that lived under the Eagles Government; none were ſo Treacherous and Diſloyal as ſome *MAGPIES*, a Bird of two colours, Double-tongu'd, and much addicted to Quibbles and mental Reſervations; yet ſome of theſe took the *Oath of Allegiance* to the *EAGLE*: But others ſtood out, and chatter'd againſt it, ſquinting at all ſuch as took it. There was one *Old One* that had his Neſt by a River-ſide, he was the *Ring-leader of the Nonſwearing* MAGPIE, a ſurly Old Maggot that wou'd not come near the *EAGLES* Court, nor ſo much as chatter out a How-d'ye to Him, but kept hiving in's Neſt under pretence of Illneſs. To him there reſorted daily the other *Nor-ſwearing* MAGPIES, with great numbers of *Jack-daws*, *Rooks*, *Swallows* and *Martins*, that the MAGPIES had drawn into their Sedition. From him they receiv'd Inſtructions, and took there Meaſures, how to behave themſelves in their their ſeveral reſpective Diſtricts, (for ſome of them were DIGNIFY'D MAGPIES, *Jackdaws*, *Rooks*, *Swallows*, and *Martins*, in ſuch and ſuch a Province of the Eagles Dominions,) and when they had ſufficiently learn'd their Cue, away they flew to their Charges, and made it their buſineſs to preach up *Non-ſwearing*, *Non obeying*, *Non-fighting*, &c. as formerly they had done *Non-reſiſting*; for all their Doctrines ran upon *Nons* and *Negatives*, the Daughters of *Paſſive Obedience*.

By theſe Arts they drew to their Party great Numbers of *Geeſe*, *Owls*, *Buzzards*, and ſuch like *ſilly* birds, who flutter'd together at certain times, and kept their *Night Cabals*, plotting Treaſon againſt the EAGLE, and contriving how to reſtore the *Abdicated OSTRICH* to the Crown. To this end, they held a private Cor-

resp[o]ndence with Him, and the VULTURE inviting them to send an Army to invade the EAGLES Dominions, and promising them all manner of Assistance and readiness to join with them at their first Appearance:

Amongst the rest of the *Dignify'd MAGPIES* concern'd in this Plot, there was one *arch Wagg* more active than the rest, who having learn'd the way of training up Pigeons to carry Letters (as usual at *Aleppo* and *Babylon*,) write two Letters, one to the OSTRICH, and another to his Mate. The Tenor whereof is as follows:

To the OSTRICH.

SIR,

THE PIDGEON *who brings this Dispatch, will be our Credentials, in giving you such an Assurance of our unfeigned* Duty *and Fidelity, as will be adequate to your very Wishes: Yet pardon an Error, which (if it be one) is the effect of my Ambition; to satisfy you from my own Mouth, and give you this Testimony under my* Claw, *That I shall snatch every opportunity, not slighting the least, and laying wait for the greatest, to acquit our selves your devoted Friends.*

SIR! *I write in the* Plural, *because I deliver the sense of the* Chief MAGPY *as well as mine own, and the others of our Nest; Who tho diminisht in number, yet, if our Arithmetick does not fail us, we have no Cyphers amongst us, but are making a progression in our Interests, that is,* in Yors.

The Bearer will, I presume, give you a true Character of us, when he shall satisfy you, That we are really what we send our selves,

Decemb. 31. *Yours intirely.*

I wish you the merriest New Year.

To the OSTRICH'S Mate.

AS *I am not able to* chatter *out the unparallel'd Complacency I took this time Twelvemonth, in receiving that Token of your Condescension and Clemency, under your own* Claw. *So I have kept about ever since in no small uneasiness, for want of the means to return you my humble Thanks, and renew my solemn Protestations of unfeigned Loyalty. From which, if I ever flinch, may my* Wings be clipt, *and I be never able to mount above a* Grashoppers Leap *from the Ground. This I declare in the Name of the* Chief MAGPY, *and the rest of our Feather, as well as on my own score. You may repose an entire confidence in us, not only for our unchangeable Fastness in the Practice of so just and well-grounded a Resolution; But also for our most vigorous endeavours to advance your Cause,* which is our own, *beyond the possibility of a Separation.*

There is no necessity, that I should particularize, since the Pidgeon *who bears this, can and will discover to you the bottom of our Hearts. I wish you could penetrate into them, to behold the Sincerity and Devotion with which we consecrate our selves to your Service. I wish you a* jolly New-Year, *and numerous, a very numerous sequel of them, and all very merry ones. Your* Young Heir *we hear is well fledg'd, he has our most passionate Vows. His Friends encrease daily, and his Adversaries lose ground.*

Decemb. 31.

After *Margery* had writ these Letters, (for you must note by the way, that these things were done, when *Birds and Beasts* were as good Scholars as men,) he began to *whet his Bill*, plum his Feathers, and hop about, to the Tune of *Packington's Pound*. He thought he had conquer'd the World, and got both the *Indies* in his *Claws*. But alack and well-a-day! the *Pidgeon* that carry'd 'em was seiz'd and all the Roguery discover'd, and *poor MAG* was fain to hop out of sight fort. For the EAGLE had a Cock belonging to him, who was very wakeful, and his Name was *Chanticleer*: This Cock had always a shrewd Eye to the MAGPIES, and their Gang; he watch'd all their motions, so that they could hardly mute, but he was privy to't. 'Twas he that seiz'd on the *Pidgeon*, and brought him to the EAGLES Palace, loaden with Letters to the OSTRICH and the VULTURE; among the Rest were these two of *Margeries own Penning*. Upon which *Margery* very prudently changed Colours, and turn'd his White and Black into a *deep Red*, and so flew away toward the VULTURE'S Territories, there to Chatter at large the Contents of his Fawning Letters.

This MAGPY had the Character of a flattering, selfish perfidious, insinuating Bird: He it was that formerly Crown'd the OSTRICH, & being afterwards discontented at the OSTRICH'S

Government

Government, with others of his Feather, sent and invited the EAGLE to come and rescue them from the OSTRICHE'S Tyranny: But as soon as he had gratify'd them in that, and the EAGLE had by the general consent of all the Birds, taken possession of the OSTRICHE'S vacant Throne, this False-hearted MAGPY and his Complices turn tail squint at his Proceedings, slight his Favour, and make such a *Chattering*, that all the honest Birds were justly offended at the Noise. Yet some of the OSTRICHE'S Creatures began to listen to them with delight, and such Artifice was used, that many simple, well-meaning Birds, were deluded into the MAGPIES *Faction*.

It ought to be remember'd here, That there was an old Grudge between the *MAGPIES* and the *BLACK-BIRDS*, the former being conscious of the harsh, grating Noise they made, envy'd and persecuted the latter with their Followers, the *Nightingales* and *Thrushes*, because of the *sweet harmonious Notes they sung in the* Woods *and* Groves, which drew all the Birds into Admiration of their Melody! So that multitudes of the MAGPIES Party abandon'd them, and went over to the *Black-Birds*: Nay, some of the MAGS themselves were so enamour'd of the *Black-Birds* Musick and innocent manner of like that they voluntarily underwent a Metamorphisis and became *Black-Birds*: But there were but a few of these, and they were of the inferiour MAGPIES. However, the great ones were highly incens'd at this Desertion of some of their own Feather, and whole *Coveys* of their Followers. Whereupon they got the OSTRICHES, EAGLES, or whosoever was King of the Birds at that time, to erect *High-Commission Courts*, Star-Chambers, and other Seats of Judicature, whither the *Black Birds* were cited, and there were sencenc'd to Imprisonment, pecuniary Mulcts, and whatsoever else the *MAGPIES* pleas'd to inflict on them. This grew in time to be a great Grievance in the *Commonwealth of Birds*; so that in process of time, these Animosities were improv'd into a Civil War During which the *Chief MAGPY* (even the Predecessor of him whom I before mention'd, the Old surly Non-swearing MAGPY, whose Nest was by a River-side,) lost his Head, for endeavouring to force the *Black Birds* to wear his Colours, and for other illegal Impositions against the Laws of Nature, and the general sense of all the Birds in the Air. After him, the whole Generation of *MAGPIES* went to Pot, except such as wou'd turn *Black Birds*.

But in twelve years time the *MAGPIE'S* Interest fac'd about again, and they fell to their old Trade of Domineering, Persecuting, and Tyrannizing over the *Black Birds*. Which contin'd till the *OSTRICH* came to be Crown'd; when he for his own Ends took the Lash out of the *MAGPIES CLAWS*, at which they chatter'd and snapt with their Bills, huff'd and bounc'd; and tho they themselves had brought the *OSTRICH* to the Throne, yet now they grew weary of Him, and never wou'd be at quiet, till they had chased him away again, and brought the *EAGLE* to the Crown; and because he wou'd not countenance their oppression of the *Black Birds*,, therefore they forsook him also, and his Interest, and endeavour'd to calumniate the Loyalty, Service and Zeal of the *Blackbirds*, who stood stoutly to him at all turns.

During these *Bickerings* and ill Offices between the *MAGPIES* and the *Black Birds*, it was thought convenient, that a Publick Convocation of the former, shou'd be call'd for an *Accommodation*. But all came to nothing; for the Prolocutor of the *MAGPIES*, having scrap'd the Ground with his *Reverend Claws*, and almost kiss'd it with a submissive Bow of his learned Noddle; made an Oration to this Effect, *That if the least Feather or Straw were pluck'd out of their old weather beaten Nest*, all wou'd either fall to the ground, or be blown away by the Wind, and so their young ones would be forc'd to take shelter in the *Black Birds Quarters*. To this eloquent Harangue, the rest of the *MAGPIES* all said *Amen* And so the matter lies where it did before, between two Stools. *Sub judice Lis est*. Yet 'tis thought that if the *Black Birds* could but obtain a fair and equal hearing of their Cause, they would soon make the *MAGPIES* asham'd of their Tyrannous, proud, covetous Actions; and convince the World that those *Pye-bald* Birds regarded nothing but the satisfaction of their Ambitious Designs, Self-will, Lust and Avarice.

These running *PIES* will not always appear above board themselves, but are in Fee with *Hawks*, *Falcons*, and such like Birds of Prey, who are their Setters for any Game. Thus they once employ'd a hundred and seventeen of these *Ravenous Birds* to joyn in a Petition to the *Eagle's* Grand Council of State, against the *Phœnix*, who was made Governour over

the *Eagle*'s Chief Grove, and had kept his place for two years together, but because he was a faithful Friend, and Loyal Subject to the *Eagle*, and was entring upon his *third year* of Government, the *Magpies* chatter'd, and set the *Hawks* and *Falcons* to scream against him, who disgorg'd a world of false and frivolous Accusations in the Council House, but all came to nothing, for that Loyal Senate would not countenance the Envious Calumnies of Male-contents. This made the *MAGPIES* and the rest of their Gang stark mad, to see the *Phœnix* shine brighter for their Persecution: So now they resolv'd to hazard all at once, and make quick work on't. The *Ostrich* must be sent for over in all haste, and the more to encourage him, the invited him to come as soon as the *Eagle* was gone to visit some of his Allies and Friends abroad. Now the *MAGPIES* hopt about, longing for the day when the *Eagle* would take his flight beyond Sea, being then in their own Conceits, cock-sure of restoring the *OSTRICH* again to his Crown. But as I have told you before, poor Pilgarlick the *Pigeon* that was to carry the News to the *Ostrich*, was caught in a Gin, with Two of his Companions, and out came all the Treason. These were all try'd for their Lives, and one of them was condemn'd to be choak'd with Hemp-seed. Now when the day of Execution was come, this *Pigeon* fell sick with the very smell of the Hempseed, and desir'd that a certain *MAGPY* a Friend of his, would chatter over a Form of Prayer that was used among the *MAGPIES* in the *Visitation of the Sick*. So the *Magpy* chatter'd, and the Pigeon coo'd, and having finish'd their Devotions, the *Pigeon very orderly* took his Hempseed, which soon spoil'd his cooing for ever after, to the great grief of the *Magpies* and their Gang. It would even grieve ones Heart to see how the *MAGPIES* sneak about after this fatal Blow? How humble and downish they look'd, not jetting it along as they us'd to do, and looking over your head, but in a more submissive posture, *like good your Worship on a Wooden Leg*, or like an Owl in an Ivy-Bush, that cares not to be seen. *Alas poor Mag!* A Cup of Sack for Mag! Mag's a Rogue, ah poor Mag, Mag, Mag, not a word of the Pudding. *Mag's at hide and seek*, and all the Gang are in a Spiritual Maze, as mute as Mum chance, that was hang'd for saying of nothing. What is become of the *seven Golden Candlesticks*? Why, by my Sol Man, I'st believe they'l aw turn Prince's Metal in a short time, or the D——— hale 'em by the Bread Lugs to H———

Good morrow Mr. Mayor of *Queenborough*. Slap, says the Casement, down falls the leaden two pence. Confound your Worship, SIR.

FINIS.

ADVERTISEMENT.

*** *On* Friday *Morning next will be publish't* Monsieur in a Mouse-Trap, *or the Parable of the* Herring pond. *By the Author of the* Magpies.

The History of the Royal Congress *at the* Hague, *with the Names, Characters, and Equipage of the Soveraign Princes that compose this* Most August Assembly, *together with an Account of the Glorious Cannopy and Chair of State. The several curious and admirable Fireworks, the many Triumphal Arches, with the other vast Preparations made for His Majesty of* Great Britain, *with an exact Draught of the manner of King* William's *entring into the* Hague, *and reception by the* States General. *Translated from the Dutch Copy, Printed at* Leiden.

An Account of the late Horrid Conspiracy, *to Depose their present Majesties K.* William *and Queen* Mary, *to bring in the* French, *and the late King* James, *and ruin the City of* London. *Also some brief Reflections on the* Tryals of the Lord Preston and Ashton. *By a Gentleman who was present at those Tryals.*

Remarks upon the Life, Tryal, and Acquitment of Arthur Earl of Torrington.

A Penitentiary Sermon *preach'd upon two young Persons doing Pennance in a publick Congregation, to which is added an accurate* Treatise of Fornication, *written upon an extraordinary occasion, by* W. Barlow, *M. A.*

The Wonders of Free Grace, *or, a compleat History of all the Remarkable Penitents that have been Executed at* Tyburn *for these last* 30 *years, with a Sermon preached in the hearing of a* Condemned Malefactor.

The third Volume of the Pocket Library (*completing the two former*) *containing a further account of the Author's* Juvenile Rambles, *with his first Project of girdling the World.*

The Vanity and Impiety of Judicial Astrology *by* Francis Owne, M. A.

The Triennial Mayor, *or*, the new Rapparees, *a Satyr, Price 6 d.*

The Antiweesils, *a Poem, price 6 d.*

London, Printed for *B. Griffitts*, 1691.

439054

UMI